



## Questions and Answers about *School To Work*

### **Q. What is *School To Work*?**

**A. *School To Work*** is an innovative, effective approach to education and workforce development that gives young people real-life, real-work experience that will prepare and motivate them to succeed in tomorrow's jobs.

### **Q. How does *School To Work* work?**

**A. *School To Work*** is a shift from a traditional educational system to a system that is dynamic and relevant to the needs of the rapidly changing global economy. ***School To Work*** usually involves some type of career exploration in all stages of a child's education. Beginning in kindergarten, students are exposed to a wide variety of career possibilities. Continuing through middle school, high school and post-secondary education, students will take part in a myriad of work-based learning opportunities.

### **Q. Who makes *School To Work* work?**

**A.** Local educators, employers, parents, students and labor leaders collaborate to design integrated school and work-based learning opportunities tailored to meet their community's unique needs.

### **Q. Why is *School To Work* needed?**

**A..** Young people across the country are entering the labor market without the skills to succeed in today's dynamic economy, while employers are having difficulty finding the trained workers they need to compete. Meanwhile, the United States is the only industrialized country that has no formal career preparation system for its students. Our country has many different vocational and job training initiatives but no one systematic approach to addressing the needs of all students, even the college bound. ***School To Work*** ties all of these different initiatives together. It creates a systematic approach to preparing students for college and careers in the 21st century.

### **Q. What's the payoff?**

**A. *School To Work*** has a variety of benefits. For students, work-based learning instills a rigorous work ethic, increased self-confidence and a sense of responsibility, qualities that prove valuable in higher education as well as work. Students gain a clear idea of career possibilities awaiting them and become more motivated to learn. Teachers are invigorated by community involvement. Dropout rates decline and universities gain serious students who know what they want out of a college education. Businesses gain well-educated, conscientious workers who are productive from day one.

**Q. How does *School To Work* differ from vocational education?**

**A.** *School To Work* blends rigorous academic standards with occupational skills. It prepares all students to succeed in a wide range of professions, particularly the high-skilled careers of the 21st century. Instead of “tracking” students into particular jobs, *School To Work* broadens students’ career options and helps them make informed decisions about which paths to pursue. *School To Work* better prepares students to enter the workforce after high school and/or to further their education.

**Q. How does *School To Work* help college-bound students?**

**A.** For the college-bound student who has already chosen a field of study, *School To Work* can help solidify that choice and provide the training and contacts that will give the student a critical edge toward a successful career. For college-bound students who have not yet chosen a career path, *School To Work* provides real-world experience that helps focus their direction.

**Q. Do *School To Work* students still get the basics?**

**A.** Yes. Students who participate in *School To Work* are enrolled in rigorous classroom curricula, which include the basics in English, science and math. Through workplace experience, students not only absorb the three R’s, they also learn about a fourth R — reality. High academic standards are required of all students. Students learn about teamwork, problem solving and responsibility — skills all businesses say they need — in addition to the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic.

**Q. Who administers *School To Work*?**

**A.** *School To Work* is created and administered at the local, community level through the partnership of educators, employers, labor union members, parents and community leaders and others.

**Q. What is the role of the National *School To Work Opportunities Office*?**

**A.** The *National School To Work Opportunities Office* is jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education. This federal initiative provides venture capital for states and local partnerships to design *School To Work* systems tailored to community needs. The federal seed money is designed to leverage additional state and local resources. In 2001 the federal funding is scheduled to run out, and *School To Work* systems will be implemented at the state and local levels.

**Q. Who do I contact to get more information?**

**A.** To learn how you can initiate a *School To Work* effort in your community, call the *National School To Work Opportunities Office* at 1-800-251-7236, or visit *School To Work’s* World Wide Web site at <http://www.stw.ed.gov>.